



Early Years Foundation Stage Phase Curriculum Rationale



What is our EYFS Phase?

Our EYFS phase is for learners from Nursery up until the end of year two, if needed. Learners start their school journey in this phase and are given time in this classroom until one of the three learning pathways are identified as the most suitable.

The learners and their needs:

Structure of Learning: Learners in EYFS are set rolling targets based on the four core areas of our curriculum – Communication, Language and Literacy; Mathematical Development, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. These are carefully planned for, ensuring there are various personalised learning opportunities to learn new skills and embed them over time. Learners are engaging in short, discrete sessions to minimise distractions and promote new skills being taught and delivered. In between these sessions offers a range of sensory diet provisions, continuous provision and the use of spaces around school where learners engage in smaller groups.

The role of the adult: Adults within the EYFS phase are predominantly taking on the role of communication and play partners. This requires adults to model within a total communication approach, whilst developing a deep understanding of the interests of learners through play based approaches. Adults are engaging with learners through preferred schematic play, as well as modelling expectations within group sessions and transitioning between activities and spaces around school. We are promoting independence from the very beginning, ensuring learners are able to engage in self-help skills and co-regulation as they begin their time at Doubletrees.

What is our curriculum designed to do?

We aim to provide a curriculum that meets the core needs of the learners within it. Our curriculum design acknowledges the barriers to learning that our young people face, and aims to support them to overcome these to be able to access the learning that will allow them to develop the key skills they need for life beyond school.

Within our EYFS phase, the barrier to learning that most of our learners experience is that of communication. Parents and staff identify that both communication and independence are a priority for life beyond school for these learners. Primarily, independence/self help skills, alongside emotional and sensory regulation are also key priorities to enable the learners on this pathway to access the broader educational offer that will support them to develop the skills they need.

How does this match our vision and values?

Achieve



- The pathway supports every learner to reach their **unique potential** by combining **academic and therapeutic learning**.
- High expectations are maintained, with progress measured **holistically**—academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Learners are empowered to develop **functional skills** for life beyond school, promoting pride in their achievements.

Belong

- A strong emphasis is placed on creating a **safe, structured, and nurturing environment** where learners feel secure and valued.
- The curriculum includes emotional literacy and trauma-informed practices to foster a **sense of belonging** and emotional safety.
- Learners are supported to build **personal independence** and community awareness.

Communicate

- Communication is a **central focus** of the pathway, recognising it as a key barrier for many learners.
- A **Total Communication approach** is embedded, with structured teaching of communication skills and social interaction.
- Learners are given the tools to express themselves, understand others, and build **meaningful relationships**.

Develop

- The curriculum is designed to develop **core academic, life, and wellbeing skills**, tailored to each learner's EHCP outcomes.
- It includes **independence training**, emotional regulation, and thematic learning to support **holistic development**.
- Collaboration with families and external agencies ensures that development is **personalised and aspirational**.

Enjoy

- The pathway offers a **rich, engaging, and inclusive curriculum** that balances structure with creativity and exploration.
- Learners participate in **creative arts, sensory experiences, and physical activities**, making learning enjoyable and meaningful.
- The school environment is one where learners **want to be**, fostering joy and curiosity.

How is our curriculum implemented?

The curriculum for all of our pathways is structured into 4 core areas:

- Feeling safe in my world
- Exploring my world
- Accessing my world
- Interacting with my world

These broadly link to the areas of the EHCP in the following way:

Feeling safe in my world	Social, emotional and mental health outcomes
Exploring my world	Cognition and learning outcomes
Accessing my world	Sensory and physical outcomes
Interacting with my world	Communication and interaction outcomes



As such, opportunities to work towards personal EHCP outcomes are embedded throughout the day.

Feeling safe in my world

To access learning, our learners need to primarily have their basic care needs met. This not only includes their physical needs, such as intimate care, food, water, sleep, but also their emotional needs. To be able to access learning our learners need to feel safe enough to do so.

At Doubletrees School, we recognise that curriculum access does not begin with content, but with connection. Pupils learn most effectively when they feel safe, understood and regulated. Attunement — the process by which adults notice, interpret and respond to pupils' communication, emotional state and sensory needs — is therefore the essential foundation for all learning.

Across all pathways, adults prioritise relational connection, co-regulation and responsive interaction before introducing structured teaching. This ensures that pupils are emotionally and cognitively ready to engage, reducing barriers to learning and increasing participation, independence and progress

Within the EYFS pathway, learning is rooted in secure attachments, emotional safety and responsive caregiving. Pupils require consistent, attuned adults who can interpret early communication, respond sensitively and create predictable, nurturing environments. Through this relational foundation, pupils develop shared attention, exploratory play and early communication.

Attunement in EYFS ensures that pupils are not expected to engage with learning tasks before they are developmentally and emotionally ready. Instead, adults build readiness through co-regulation, play-based interaction and total communication approaches. This enables pupils to access early learning experiences with confidence and curiosity.

EYFS Attunement for Curriculum Access

Stage	Description
Stage 1: I feel safe and held	Adults provide warmth, predictability and calming presence, enabling the child to regulate and feel secure.
Stage 2: I notice and respond	The child begins to notice familiar people, sensory cues and routines, showing early awareness.
Stage 3: We connect together	Adults join play, mirror actions and build shared attention through repetition, gesture and expression.



Stage 4: I communicate with support	The child expresses needs and preferences using gesture, objects, visuals or emerging language.
Stage 5: I am ready to explore and learn	The child engages in play-based learning and early structured experiences with support.

Attunement in EYFS creates the conditions for communication, play and early learning to develop securely.

Alongside this, a strand of our curriculum is Emotional Literacy. We support our learners to understand and communicate their feelings through Emotional Coaching and modelling by adults, with opportunities though out the day built in to check in with the learners as to how there are feeling, using a Total Communication approach.

We are a Trauma Informed school and therefore apply the neuroscience of Mental health and ill health, using Panksepp's emotional system, the neuroscience of emotion, known as affective neuroscience. We use the Motional assessment tool to measure and track the areas of Panksepp's emotional systems, seeking to promote the CARE, SEEKING and PLAY systems (those that promote pro-social chemicals), whilst reducing those of RAGE, FEAR, PANIC/GRIEF (systems that trigger stress hormones). Activities to promote the CARE, SEEKING and PLAY systems are planned for through termly universal snapshots and delivered regularly. This is supplemented by comprehensive snapshots and individual interventions for learners in need of further support. This forms the Emotional Literacy strand of our curriculum.

Exploring my world

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin the key principles of the Early Years framework. These are thread throughout our core offer and curriculum.

- Engagement: Play and exploring
- Motivation: Active learning
- Thinking: Creative and critical thinking

Alongside this, Cherry Garden is used to inform our planning and assessment, which breaks down areas of the EYFS curriculum into small skills-based steps. This curriculum consists of prime and specific areas of learning, with the prime areas heavily underpinning the approaches used within Doubletrees Early Years classes.

The areas are as follows:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED - prime)
- Physical Development (PD - prime)
- Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL - prime)
- Mathematical Development (MD - specific)
- Understanding the World (UTW - specific)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD - specific)

We ensure our learners are accessing a broad and balanced curriculum, influenced by their interests and motivators, whilst also maintaining depth and breadth across a two-year rolling programme.



Core areas

PSED consists of promoting self-care and independence, building on positive relationships with others and the development of understanding own emotions and regulation strategies. Learners in EYFS access regular Move to Learn sessions, delivered initially by the Specialist Intervention Team. This weekly session is an opportunity to understand and teach regulation strategies which are appropriate for each individual. Engagement with this is assessed over time and class teachers later work in class teams to continue the delivery of these strategies with resources kept in the provision e.g. peanut balls, trampette, bubbles, sensory trays with dry and messy stimuli to promote tactile discrimination. In addition to this, we are working with the NHS to join the Big Brush Club to promote tooth brushing in schools.

Physical Development is primarily focused around gross and fine motor skills. We follow the Doubletrees Swimming scheme to ensure consistency as learners progress through various swimming skills where independence is promoted and learners are encouraged to understand how to keep themselves safe in the water.

CLL is at the heart of all of our teaching, learning and play. As learners join Doubletrees in EYFS, they are exposed to a communication-rich environment. Within our total communication approach, pupil voice is promoted through a range of core and activity specific boards, choice boards and modelled Makaton. Learners are also taught a daily core word session and apply this in a range of contexts. We share these core words with families so there is consistency in practising these at home too. As learners acquire an understanding of a range of symbols, we move onto reading books through colourful semantics. This is where learner will choose a symbol from a particular word group when sharing a story, demonstrating their comprehension of the key words in the text.

Specific areas

Mathematical Development is an area which promotes problem solving through the exploration of cause and effect resources and developing resilience to respond to trial and improvement based tasks. Learners are taught number rhymes through a multi-sensory approach and are able to explore number through the use of mathematical manipulatives. There are also regular opportunities to learn about shape and measure through messy play and using various sensory resources e.g. magnetic shapes, foam blocks.

Understanding the World offers learners opportunities to learn about themselves and others. We ensure that we are exploring technology in a safe and appropriate manner, as well as exploring online safety through sensory stories. This area also enables us to explore our local environment and understand how to take care of plants and animals.

Expressive Arts offers a multi-sensory expressive experience with concentration on the process rather than the product. Learners are encouraged to engage with mixed-media, either solo or as part of a group. This also consists of small world play and role play within familiar settings, such as a kitchen set up.

Accessing my world



To access any part of our offer, our learners need to be calm, regulated and feel safe, therefore this strand is a therapeutic one, to support sensory and physical regulation. Many of our learners have therapy plans which are timetabled throughout the day either in the classroom or in the dedicated spaces within the school. This is supplemented by ad hoc interventions when learners indicate or communicate that they need a regulation break. The amount of therapeutic intervention each learner received on any given day, varies based on their need at that time.

Interacting with my world

This strand focuses on communication to support learners to understand what is happening around them, for them to express their basic wants and needs and to support positive and enriching social opportunities that will support them later in life to be active citizens within their community.

As well as being emersed in a Total Communication environment, where they are exposed to lots of different models and methods of communication, learners are explicitly and systematically taught communication skills, through a communication curriculum. This supports development of communication from expression basic wants and needs, to social interactions and turn taking to the more formal accessing services within the community. There is a full communication offer available with more details.

What does a typical day in Early Years look like?

A day in Early Years ensures opportunities for a range of short, discrete sessions. There are also regular opportunities to access outdoor spaces within the school day to mirror These are inclusive of the following:

Morning:

- Climate for calm upon arrival to school
- Reading and mark making opportunities
- Good morning group into a Phonics adult-led session
- Snack and personal care routines
- Movement break (Write Dance/Dough Disco)
- Maths adult-led session
- Number and geometry opportunities
- Movement break (playground)
- Dinner

Afternoon:

- Core word adult-led session
- Sensory circuits/TACPAC session
- Swimming/movement session
- Snack and personal care routines
- End of day reflection – story massage

How do we know our curriculum is successful?

Learners are assessed through personalised learning goals (PLGs). They have PLGs for their EHCP outcomes and for CLL, Maths, PSED and PD outcomes, all of which are personalised to the individual, accounting for their own barriers and needs.



Progress is also captured and celebrated for the wider curriculum both therapeutic and academic. We use learning journeys to track engagement and progress in most of the curriculum areas, so that access to the full range of opportunities can be seen, alongside the progress within the opportunities offered and towards the defined endpoints, both within the EHCP and for life beyond school.

Learners are set personalised learning goals within the Cherry Garden framework for PSED, Physical Development, CLL and Maths. These are broken down into various areas so that skills are most appropriate for each individual learner, with class teachers regularly reflecting on their progress towards these.

What is the long term scheme of work?

		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
	Year 1	Senses	Food	Weather	Spring	Seaside	Transport
	Year 2	All About Me	Changing Seasons	Colours and Patterns	Explorers	Growth	Farm
		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Key Texts	Year 1	From Head to Toe – Eric Carle	The Tiger Who Came to Tea – Judith Kerr	Tree – Britta Teekentrup	Oi Frog – Kes Gray and Jim Field	Seaside – Sharing a Shell	Little Blue Truck – Alice Schertle
	Year 2	Paper Dolls – Julia Donaldson	Shark in a Park on a Windy Day! – Nick Sharratt	Rainbow Fish – Marcus Pfister	We're Going on a Bear Hunt – Michael Rosen	The Very Hungry Caterpillar – Eric Carle	What the Ladybird Heard – Julia Donaldson

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
CLL	EYFS learners will be developing their preferred means of communication through modelled use of objects of reference and photos. Some learners may be able to access some symbols. - Daily visual schedule embedded - Choice of preferred activity based on learners' stage of communication e.g. OoR/photo/symbol. - Supported transitions		EYFS learners will be developing their understanding of objects of reference linked with photos. Some learners will be accessing photos and symbols consistently. - Transition schedules - Choice of preferred activity based on transitioning from OoR to photos, or photos to symbols and increasing number of choices. - Use of visual timers in motivating activities		Many EYFS learners will be consistently holding their transition schedule and recognize where they are going through the use of OoR and photos. Some learners will be using two step transition schedules with symbols. - Transition schedules with photos/symbols - Most learners accessing wants/needs symbol choice board in the kitchen area - Most learners accessing generic sensory choice photo/symbol board.	



	- Modelled use of traffic lights to build up tolerance of task ending	- Use of traffic lights consistently used to end task	
MD	Links to Maths stories and planned opportunities from the provision overviews based on the individual curriculum targets based on Routes for Learning and some learners moving into Number. Learners may engage in Curiosity boxes for a sustained period. Many learners will be encouraged to explore Stage 1 of Attention Autism as part of an adult-led Maths session to engage in Routes for Learning. Learners within this stage would not be accessing formal TEACCH tasks linked to Number or Shape, Space and Measure.		
PSED	EYFS – Introducing the use of spoons for self-serving and backwards chaining to prompt independence with getting dressing and washing hands for mealtimes. Most learners will be engaging in solitary play, likely to be engaging in a preferred schematic play. Building up tolerance through playful TEACCH tuff trays to share resources supported by an adult.	EYFS – Introduction of open cups where appropriate and more independence prompted through personal care and hygiene routines. Learners supported with hand over hand to use cutlery and match plates to placemats by colour. Developing playful TEACCH tuff trays through reducing the number of resources to enable mirrored play and tolerance of peers engaging in similar play.	All – Consistently prompting independence through personal care routines, use of cutlery and finding own bottle, plate, cup etc. Enhancing playful TEACCH tuff trays to encourage learners to engage in cooperative opportunities supported with communication tools. Learners will be supported to engage in turn-taking and building a tolerance for waiting.
PD	Year 1 and 2 learners will be swimming weekly and encouraged through verbal and physical prompts to kick their legs, swim on their front/back with some support. All learners will be accessing the playground, yard and hall for regular movement sessions, with sensory circuits in the SI room. Daily access to wet and dry messy play for mark making opportunities. Some learners will be using a whole hand grasp briefly to engaging with big mark making tools.	EYFS learners will be accessing weekly swimming sessions this term, in a 1:1 capacity to build up confidence and trusting relationship with a familiar adult in the water. Year 1 and 2 learners will be encouraged to swim more independently through the use of float aids and exploring the wider swimming pool space. All learners will be accessing the playground, yard and hall for regular movement sessions incorporating ball skills and climbing, with sensory circuits in the SI room. Daily access to wet and dry messy play for mark making opportunities. Some learners will be using a whole hand grasp for	Weekly swimming sessions for all learners in small groups, promoting independence where learners are comfortable to do so. Ball skills sessions in the hall and increased independence with accessing climbing equipment in the playground. Daily access to wet and dry messy play for mark making opportunities. All learners will be encouraged to engage in gross and fine motor opportunities to develop strength for mark making. Few learners will be progressing from a whole hand grasp to a pincer grasp.



		an increasing amount of time when prompted.	
UW/E AD	Progressive opportunities to explore the arts through community events within school and exploratory play through intensive interactions. Learners will develop an understanding of the world through heuristic and transient play, and adults modelling and mirroring opportunities through enhanced provision based on learners' interests and PLGS.		
Year 2			
CLL	EYFS learners will be developing their preferred means of communication through modelled use of objects of reference and photos. Some learners may be able to access some symbols. - Daily visual schedule embedded - Choice of preferred activity based on learners' stage of communication e.g. OoR/photo/symbol. - Supported transitions - Modelled use of traffic lights to build up tolerance of task ending	EYFS learners will be developing their understanding of objects of reference linked with photos. Some learners will be accessing photos and symbols consistently. - Transition schedules - Choice of preferred activity based on transitioning from OoR to photos, or photos to symbols and increasing number of choices. - Use of visual timers in motivating activities - Use of traffic lights consistently used to end task	Many EYFS learners will be consistently holding their transition schedule and 10 recognize where they are going through the use of OoR and photos. Some learners will be using two step transition schedules with symbols. - Transition schedules with photos/symbols - Most learners accessing wants/needs symbol choice board in the kitchen area - Most learners accessing generic sensory choice photo/symbol board.
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Provision – Established EYFS classes

Year 1			
CLL	Regular sensory stories and story massage linked to fiction and non-fiction based on current topic. Learners are supported to use their personalised choice boards and encouraged to sort using photos/symbols in the environment when tidying up. Phonics Phase 1 taught through Attention Autism and modelled within the provision.	Beginning to introduce colourful semantics through focus texts – matching symbols. Learners are consistently using their personalised choice boards (photos/symbols) and beginning to sort items by the photos/symbols in the environment. Phonics Phase 1 taught through Attention Autism and modelled within the provision.	Using colourful semantics through focus texts to develop understanding of 'what' and 'who'. Learners are accessing generic choice boards consistently to choose nursery rhymes, stories or Singing Hands. Phonics Phase 1 taught through Attention Autism and modelled within the provision. Modelling satpin through these sessions.



MD	Attention Autism Stages 1 and 2, some learners accessing Stage 3. - Embedding Routes for Learning through Stage 1 - Number consistently threaded through delivery with a focus on number, shape, space or measure concept. Daily TEACCH tasks for Number supported by an adult.		Attention Autism Stages 1-3 - Embedding Routes for Learning through Stage 1 - Number consistently threaded through delivery with a focus on number, shape, space or measure concept. - Turn-taking opportunities in Stage 3 with a focus on a number rhyme or modelled use of a large manipulative e.g. Numicon, tens frame. Continuous provision to reflect manipulatives modelled in adult-led session. Daily TEACCH tasks for Number Daily TEACCH tasks for Shape, Space and Measure		Attention Autism Stages 1-3, Stage 4 for some learners. - Embedding Routes for Learning through Stage 1 - Number consistently threaded through delivery with a focus on number, shape, space or measure concept. - Turn-taking opportunities in Stage 3 with a focus on a number rhyme or modelled use of a large manipulative e.g. Numicon, tens frame. - Transitioning for Stage 4 to recreate own version with Maths focus. Continuous provision to reflect manipulatives modelled in adult-led session. Daily TEACCH tasks for Number Daily TEACCH tasks for Shape, Space and Measure
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PD	Ball skills sessions focusing on accuracy in catching the ball and kicking it towards a target. Use of trikes and balance bikes to develop balancing and co-ordination skills. Use of climbing equipment to build on safe navigation of obstacles.		Ball skills sessions focusing on turn-taking and team skills through small group ball games. Use of trikes and bikes without stabilisers to develop balancing and co-ordination skills. Use of climbing equipment to build on safe navigation of obstacles.		Learners will begin to engage in games which follows short, clear rules through child-initiated or adult-led opportunities. Learners will be accessing bikes and climbing equipment safely to navigate obstacles and engage in sensory circuits.
UW	Sensory walks – exploring the local environment Diwali celebrations	Food tasting /cooking from around the world	Exploring animals around the world	Science Week	Sensory seaside tuff trays to explore shells, sand, water, sea creatures.



		Remembrance Day activities Road Safety Week				
EAD	Mixed media collages linked to preferences	Exploring prints and patterns using different tools	Write dance – exploring movement and mark making (gross and fine motor)	Spring mixed media collage	Recreating beach scenes using ICT/mixed media/group projects.	
Year 2						
CLL	Regular sensory stories and story massage linked to fiction and non-fiction based on current topic. Learners are supported to use their personalised choice boards and encouraged to sort using photos/symbols in the environment when tidying up. Phonics Phase 1 taught through Attention Autism and modelled within the provision.	Beginning to introduce colourful semantics through focus texts – matching symbols Learners are consistently using their personalised choice boards (photos/symbols) and beginning to sort items by the photos/symbols in the environment. Phonics Phase 1 taught through Attention Autism and modelled within the provision.	Using colourful semantics through focus texts to develop understanding of ‘what’ and ‘who’. Learners are accessing generic choice boards consistently to choose nursery rhymes, stories or Singing Hands. Phonics Phase 1 taught through Attention Autism and modelled within the provision. Modelling satpin through these sessions.			
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UW		Remembrance Day activities Road Safety Week		Exploring sinking and floating through water play Science Week	Growing plants and exploring the tools for gardening
EAD	Self portraits	Firework splat painting, chalk and black paper	Leaf printing for the changing seasons	Opportunities to dress up as an explorer e.g. binoculars, bag, hat	Using flowers to paint with or painting flowers through interpretation

How is the curriculum assessed?

All learners have Personalised learning Goals (PLGs). They have these for their EHCP outcomes and also for the Prima areas.

For each area of need, there is an annual target set towards the EHCP outcome, with a mid year target also set to allow teachers to assess progress towards the annual target during the year and if necessary amend the target.

Learners are set a curriculum targets for each strand of the Prime Areas. These are assessed formatively and when a target is assessed as Established or Generalised, a new target is set.

We also use Pupil Conferencing. These are regularly held to explore all aspects of the learners' experiences, including progress towards outcomes, attendance and factors that



may affect this, contextual information, external therapies and interventions and talents, interests and aspirations of learners. This supports a wholistic view of the learner and identifies any barriers they may be experiences to support overcoming these and celebrates their successes and achievements.

